AN: This is a very pivotal chapter to the series, and you shall see why. I'm saying nothing more.

Poison

Happy Meal

"God, we've been waiting for this for ages," the lioness said as she took the bag of Sumu from Moto. "It's about time they started slingin' Sumu again."

"Well, it's back in business," Moto said with a grin. "Can't have pretty girls like you going without their fix, now, can we?"

"This is awesome," replied the lioness. "I need a hit."

The lioness handed over a wad of notes, which Moto eagerly took. "Thank you for your custom, girls," he chuckled. "Of course, I can provide more than Sumu, if you want—"

Moto was cut off when a gun was jammed into his mouth.

The cub stared with wide eyes at TPYMK, who pinned him up against a tree. Money went flying everywhere and the two lionesses quickly scarpered.

"*Whoa!*" Moto yelled, panicking. His voice sounded muffled, since there was a gun in his mouth. "Who the hell are you?"

"You pathetic little junkie," TPYMK snarled. His anger seemed ferocious. "I'm going to put you out of your misery."

Moto shook frantically, trying to escape – but TPYMK had an iron grip. He couldn't get away.

"Please, man—"

"Shut up!" TPYMK snapped. "Just… shut up…"

TPYMK's finger tightened on the trigger. He stared into Moto's eyes, feeling the urge to kill him there and then.

Just one little bullet. That's all it would take.

The former detective got ready to fire, when common sense suddenly invaded his brain. He considered the ramifications of his actions, knowing that if he shot Moto, then he would be leaving far too much evidence behind. The HPD would find out that he had done it within days. He had done far too much to allow himself to be locked up in a jail cell…

TPYMK's angry face softened. He lowered the gun, causing Moto to drop roughly to the ground. The cub grunted in discomfort, staring up in surprise at him.

TPYMK said nothing, though. Instead, he turned around and headed back towards the Junk-Mobile.

"Hey – what the hell, man?" Moto yelled, getting to his paws. "I'm gonna mess you up the next time I see you! I'm with the Family! I'll find you and kill you!"

TPYMK got into the car and screeched off down the dirt road, desperate to get out of there as soon as possible.

He knew that he had made a very bad mistake.

TPYMK kept his head down as he got out of the car, having parked it in the driveway outside the house. Hands thrust deep in his pockets, he averted the gaze of Sarafina, who was walking towards him.

"Yo!" Sarafina exclaimed, staring at TPYMK in disbelief as he brushed past her, opening the front door. "What the hell's going on?"

"Just get inside," TPYMK replied in a quiet voice. "We've got a problem."

"As if we didn't have, like, nine million problems already," Sarafina remarked as she followed him into the house. "Jesus, you're gonna end up getting us both killed."

"No one's going to get killed," TPYMK said, walking into the living room. "Well, not us, at least."

"How many people do you wanna kill this time?" Sarafina asked. "Thirty? Forty? Come on – how much is enough?"

"Don't be stupid," TPYMK said. "It's that detective. He was after me; that's why I had to rush out. You haven't forgotten that in an hour, have you? Or are you high again?"

"Screw you!" Sarafina yelled. "I did more than keep that jerkoff talking; I kicked him right out of the house! He thinks I'm your whore or something!"

"He wants me in jail," TPYMK said. "And I bet he'll come back here with a warrant tomorrow."

"A warrant?" said Sarafina. "What the hell's in here – aside from food and furniture?"

"Nothing," TPYMK said. "He wants something that I got rid of ages ago."

"What?"

"My file," TPYMK replied.

Sarafina narrowed her eyes at him. "A file?" she said. "What, you mean like for nails?"

"No, not a file for your putrid purple toenails," TPYMK said, scowling at her. "A file containing all of the information on my past and my career," he explained. "HPD keep a record of all their employees, as do every other police force in the world."

"Well, what did you do with this file?" Sarafina said.

"I burnt it," TPYMK said. "There are things in there that no one should ever know."

"Like what?" Sarafina asked.

"I told you," he said, fixing her with his gaze. "No one should ever know."

In that moment, Sarafina suddenly felt a little frightened of

TPYMK. There was no telling what he was capable of doing… She dreaded to think what had occurred in his past. If he wasn't going to say, then it had to be something truly despicable.

"Right," she said, shifting on her paws. "Confidential stuff. I get it. So that means, even if he does search the house, he's got nothing to, uh… incriminate you?"

"No," TPYMK said. "But he's going to try and arrest me for the smallest reason. He thinks I'm a threat to his investigation. I don't know what he has against me, but I'm not going to let him take me down for nothing."

"So… you wanna… bump him off?" Sarafina presumed, sick to her stomach of having to resort to violence all the time. All she wanted was some peace and quiet. It seemed like too much to ask for – especially in this city.

TPYMK nodded. "If we get him out of the way, then we should be free," he said, not bothering to worry Sarafina even more by telling her about his confrontation with Moto. Hopefully, the ricin that Sarafina had slipped into his food would take effect within a day or two…

"How are you gonna do that?" Sarafina said, sitting down on the sofa. "More ricin?"

TPYMK reached into his pocket, pulling out the substance in question. "I bought some more," he told her. "Seeing as it was so effective with Moto, I'm sure repeating the same method will be sufficient enough."

"But he's a cop," Sarafina argued. "You can't just show up at his house and be all like, 'Hey, man – you wanna grab a Subway?' and then poison his ham-and-cheese. It doesn't work like that. You need, like, *connections*."

"'Connections'?" said TPYMK, raising an eyebrow. "Tell me, Sarafina: just what do you mean by that? 'Cause I seriously doubt that you're an expert on poisoning police—"

"You need to be connected with him," Sarafina said. "I knew Moto. You don't even know this guy – it's completely different."

"There's nothing stopping me from sneaking into the police station and slipping it into his coffee," TPYMK said, trying to allay Sarafina's fears. "Calm down, Sarafina. I have everything under control."

"Yeah," Sarafina muttered. "But for how long?"

"Yo to the yo to the yo, yo, yo, yo!" Moto exclaimed as he walked into the dingy room where Vitani had brought him before. It was the next day, and the cub had sold his entire quota that the Family of Blood had given him. He knew that they would be pleased – and, hopefully, he would be able to have some more drugs in return… "What's up, dudes?"

"Shut up," Vitani said. She was sat at the table with her mother, Zira, and there was another face there who Moto hadn't seen before. He was a rather lanky-looking lion, who seemed quite frail and was constantly scratching parts of his body. Definitely an addict, Moto could tell. "Sit down."

"No trouble, gorgeous," said Moto, sitting down opposite Zira, who didn't look very pleased to see him at all. "So, uh… what's going on?"

"Eat," Zira instructed, gesturing with a paw to the food on the table. It looked like tomato soup.

"Soup?" said Moto, stirring it around with a spoon. "Couldn't we have had, like, a Happy Meal or something? That stuff is the bomb!"

"*Eat*," Zira ordered, more commandingly this time.

Moto rolled his eyes and did as instructed, slurping up the soup with his spoon. "Anyway, I've got some good news for you. And when I say good, I mean good as in—"

"Bad?" Vitani interrupted.

"What? No way, pussy," Moto replied. "This is *great* news! I sold all of the Sumu you guys gave me – and I even managed to scrape in a few joints on the side, too."

"You'd better not be selling your own drugs to make a profit," Zira threatened, finally speaking with that gravelly tone in her voice. "You sell what we give you. It's our official brand."

"Yeah – it's like, *blue*," Moto said. "But it's not really blue; it's like that… purple kind of blue. By the way, did I mention that I think purple toenails are *really* sexy?"

"Does he ever shut up?" Zira asked, shooting a look towards her daughter. "I'm beginning to think that putting a bullet in his head would be a viable option. Either that or ripping his testicles out with a nutcracker and forcing him to eat them."

"Hey, hey – come on, ladies," Moto said, giving them a cheesy grin. "There's no need to start talking about my chocolate peanuts. There's plenty of time for that later. This is business talk, right?"

"So you sold it all?" Zira asked. "You didn't smoke it? You didn't snort it? It's all in the paws of our customers?"

"Paws and talons," Moto corrected her. "A couple of eagles wanted some, too."

"Where's my share, huh?" said the male lion, piping up. He scratched the back of his neck, muttering frantically. "I never get my share – I always deserve my share – no one ever gives it to me…"

"Shut your trap, Nuka," snarled Zira. "You take too much of our product. I told you to cut back."

"Don't tell me to cut back," mumbled Nuka, scratching his neck even harder, drawing blood. "I'll show you – I'll kill you – you give me my cut…"

"And they paid in full?" Zira asked Moto, ignoring the ramblings

of her son, who had quite clearly been driven a little bit insane from all the drugs he'd taken.

"Oh, yeah," Moto said, nodding eagerly. "Cash, right upfront. I practically had to stuff all the dough up my butt for the drop-off. Who's gonna collect that stuff, anyway?"

"We'll take care of it," Zira assured him. "You just worry about selling our product and making sure that it's paid for properly. We wouldn't want any… monetary disagreements to happen, now, would we?"

"I guess not," Moto said. "But don't worry – you've got me. Moto! They call me the Jizz-Meister back home!"

"What the hell does that even mean?" Zira yelled, losing her patience with Moto's endless torrent of dismal slang and revolting lexis.

"It means I keep everything under control, and in a large amount," Moto said. "Now, I think I'm ready for another batch to start slinging, don't you? Your customers are gonna double – no, *triple* – by the end of the week!"

Zira finished her bowl of soup, regarding Moto with narrowed his eyes, as if studying him. "I suppose the cub can be trusted," she decided, looking to her daughter.

Vitani glanced at Moto. "I guess so," she said. "He's brought back more cheddar than any of the other dealers we've got out there."

"Then give him another batch," Zira commanded, rising from the table. "Our stocks are wearing thin – Death's reserves are selling fast, it seems – so we'll have to find a new chemist within the month."

"You'd better," said Nuka, shaking like a leaf. "I need my fix – I *deserve* my fix – I want it now…"

"You'll have your fix in time, my son," Zira said, before glancing

at Moto like she would a piece of sticky chewing gum fixed to the ground. "I suppose it's about time we discussed the subject of payment for you."

"I'm sure we can work something out," Moto said with a smile. "As long as it's enough to buy more of your delicious Sumu, I'll be as happy as a throbbing—"

"Just give him his money," Zira said, wiping a paw across her forehead, "and then get him out of my sight."

"The kid's vanished off the radar," Askari said, staring at Bora with a stumped expression on his face. "I can't find him anywhere."

"I don't believe this," Bora said, glancing around the office space. He had been on his way to the interrogation room before his partner interrupted him. "How can that rat just fall off the face of the earth? He's only – what? – nine years old."

"Maybe someone's keeping him hidden," Askari mused, ignoring Bora's exaggeration. "He was one of Death's guys, and the sale of Sumu has been going up since yesterday. It wouldn't surprise me if someone else has started the business again."

"Like TPYMK," muttered Bora.

Askari rolled his eyes. "Look, I don't know what you've got against this guy, but I seriously doubt that he's a major Sumu dealer. He burned down that place; don't you think he would have stole the drugs first instead of torching them?"

"All right, so maybe he's not a *dealer*," Bora said, "but he's definitely got something to hide, and I want to know what it is. He stole his own file. As if that's not enough of a clue."

"Look, this Sumu business is way more of a problem than the guy who killed Death," Askari said. "We've got reports of about two or three dealers operating in the jungle already."

"Is one of them Moto?" Bora asked.

"I don't know," Askari said. "It's pretty vague, but if I were you, I'd go take a look. There might be something there worth investigating."

Bora nodded. "Yeah. You're probably right," he said.

"But first," interrupted a new voice, "do you think I could get a cup of tea?"

Bora and Askari looked up at the smiling form of TPYMK, both astounded by his sudden appearance.

"*You*," Bora said, pointing up at him with a claw. "How the hell did you get in here?"

"I told the lovely receptionist behind the desk that I had to see you urgently," TPYMK said, "and I do."

"What the hell do you want, you scumbag?" Bora asked. "'Cause if you're here to steal another file, then—"

"I have no idea what you're talking about," TPYMK interrupted. "I'm here to give you some information on the Sumu business that's currently starting up again."

"You have information on it?" Bora said. "So you admit to being involved, then?"

"No," TPYMK said. "I just know about it. Why don't we retreat somewhere a little more… secluded, and I'll tell you?"

Bora considered the former detective for a moment, wondering on whether he was telling the truth or not. He seemed to be, from what the lion could tell. However, there was something… odd about this that he couldn't quite figure out. Still, talking to him wouldn't exactly be a hindrance.

"Fine," Bora said. He glanced at Maarifa, who was sat at a nearby desk. "Maarifa, can you get me a cup of coffee?"

He failed to see TPYMK smile…

"So…" Bora said, staring at TPYMK and taking a sip from his coffee. They had found themselves in the interrogation room once more. "What do you have to tell me, TPYMK? Where'd you hide your secret stash of Sumu?"

"There is no secret stash of Sumu," TPYMK said. "However, I do know one of the dealers who is operating right now. Probably as we speak."

"A dealer, eh? So who is he?" Bora asked. "And how do you know him?"

"Moto," TPYMK said. "I saw him. In the jungle. Dealing to two lionesses."

"What were you doing in the jungle?" Bora asked, narrowing his eyes.

"I was taking a walk," TPYMK explained.

"While you were trying to avoid me?" presumed Bora. "When I showed up at your house yesterday?"

"I was out for quite a while yesterday," TPYMK said. "You showed up at my house, did you?"

"So your chambermaid didn't tell you," Bora said with a slight smile. "I bet she's keeping more secrets in her head than she does in her cooch, huh?"

"Why were you at my house?" TPYMK demanded.

"Because I know you're hiding something," Bora said. "No one steals their personal file for no reason. It's obvious there's something you don't want people to know – and I'm gonna find out what it is."

TPYMK just stared at him, repeating what he had said earlier. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

Bora smiled back. "Okay," he said, standing up. "If that's the way you want to play it then fine. I'll, uh, grab some more milk

for my coffee and you can tell me all about your little encounter with Moto."

"Sounds like a good idea," TPYMK said, watching as Bora left the room.

Once he was sure he was gone, TPYMK immediately reached into his pocket, pulling out the ricin and holding it right over Bora's cup of coffee. He dropped the substance into the cup, watching as it sizzled and dissolved within seconds.

TPYMK sat back in his chair, satisfied.

Bora would be dead within three days.

"So you did it?" Sarafina said, popping a fry into her mouth.

"Yeah," TPYMK said, nodding. "It's done."

The former detective and the lioness were sat by the window in the fast food restaurant known to most as McDonald's. There weren't many other people sat in the restaurant, despite it being early afternoon.

"Oh, that's good," Sarafina said. "So to celebrate murdering someone, you decide to buy us a Happy Meal so we can sit around like a couple of kids. Great idea."

"It was the first thing that popped into my head," TPYMK said. "Sorry for not choosing a more gourmet meal, Queen Toenails. It's all the same stuff, anyway."

Sarafina shoved another mouthful of fries down her throat. "Well… at least it tastes nice."

TPYMK glanced at the pitiful toy that came with the meal: a plastic monkey. "Why do they always give you that trash with the food?" he wondered, reaching for the bag it was contained in. "I might as well just throw it away."

"No!" Sarafina snapped, snatching the toy out of TPYMK's hand. "It's *my* toy!"

TPYMK stared at her. "You've gotta be kidding me," he said. "It's a piece of plastic; it's gonna break within a day!"

"Blow me," Sarafina said. "I don't tell you what to do with *your* Happy Meal."

TPYMK rolled his eyes. Sarafina often seemed to have the mentality of a child at times. Then again, she wasn't exactly the most mature lioness who ever lived; he often caught her watching the Disney Channel on TV. She cried at the end of *Toy Story 3*, for God's sake.

"How do you know it'll work, anyway?" Sarafina asked.

"What, the toy?"

"No, you idiot," Sarafina said. She lowered her voice. "The ricin."

"It's in his coffee, which he went to get milk for just before he left the room," TPYMK said. "I'm pretty sure that it's in his digestive tract right now, so don't worry. He will no longer be a problem."

"Feels like we've gotta kill someone everyday," Sarafina said, taking a sip from her Coke which lay next to the fries. "Why the hell do we gotta do this all the time?"

"Because I do it for you."

"What?"

"You heard me," TPYMK said. "All of this is for you. So you don't get into trouble again. Because I care about you. More than anyone, or anything else on this earth. And the last thing I want is for you to end up in jail. God knows what'll happen then. Jesus…"

The two of them sat in silence for a few moments.

Then Sarafina reached across the table, and kissed him.

And, much to her surprise, that kiss was returned.

AN: Whew! So, Moto is doing good business with the Family of Blood, Bora might find some ricin in his coffee, and TPYMK and Sarafina have kissed! Ooh, boy, that last one is a bit of a shocker, isn't it? This could affect the plot in a variety of ways…